(b) Since the guidelines are applicable only to single hull tankers older than 25 years, there is no likelihood of guidelines affecting the crude import trade. There will not be any adverse impact on the export of rice/wheat/sugar etc. as these commodities are carried by bulk carriers, which are not covered by these guidelines.

(c) Yes, Sir. There already exists a monitoring mechanism in the form of Port State Control and Flag State Control.

Assistance for upliftment of dalits

†2819. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many State Governments have still not obtained the assistance given by the Centre for the upliftment of dalits;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government are going to take for betterment of those States, who are deprived of these facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Economic condition of muslims

2820. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the economic condition of Muslims in the country has deteriorated during the last three years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to ameliorate their condition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI) : (a) No separate study or survey has been made by this Ministry regarding the economic condition of any particular religious community.

(b) Does not arise.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) For economic development of minorities, including Muslims, the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation, a Public Sector Undertaking under the aegies of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, has been set up. The objective of the Corporation is to provide concessional credit to weaker sections amongst minorities for starting self-employment ventures.

Participation of handicapped team in the World Summer Games

2821. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that recently a team of 105 handicapped/ mentally retarded children, coaches and managers went to Dublin, Ireland to participate in the World Summer Games;

(b) whether the team won 110 medals out of which 34 were gold; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to reward the childrren who have brought credit to the nation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL) : (a) to (c) The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment was requested by a Special Olympics, Bharat for financial assistance and it sanctioned Rs. 20 lakh as a grant in aid, to facilitate participation of an Indian team of 103 mentally challenged children, coaches and managers in the World Summer Games held in June 2003 at Dublin, Ireland. It has been reported by Special Olympics, Bharat that the team has won 110 medals including 34 gold. The Ministry has no plans to provide any further assistance.

Criteria for senior citizens

2822. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are different criteria at different places for senior citizenship;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to put a uniform criteria for the senior citizens; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?